recruiting agents for violation of Section 10 of the Emigration Act, 1983. All State Government/Union Territories have been requested to instruct the Police Stations to keep strict vigil on the activities of the unregistered agents engaged in illegal violations.

(c) Under Section 22 of the Emigration Act, 1983, no Indian citizen can emigrate unless he/she obtains emigration clearance from the Offices of Protector of Emigrants (POE). However, through periodical reviews, the regulatory mechanism has been progressively liberalized and certain categories of persons have been exempted from the requirement of obtaining emigration clearance. Persons belonging to any of these categories are entitled to get the ENCR (Emigration Check Not Required) endorsement on their passports and consequently do not require to obtain any clearance from POE offices.

Voting rights to NRIs

1823. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have initiated any steps to give voting rights to Non- Resident Indians;

(b) the reaction of Government on to how the voting rights are proposed to be implemented and whether any steps initiated to amend the People's Representation Act for this purpose;

(c) whether any State legislatures has passed any resolution in this regard, and if so the details thereof; and

(d) whether Government have any Statistics relating to the number of Non-Resident Indians are eligible for voting rights, if it is allowed?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) and (b) Yes. A proposal for giving voting rights to Indian citizens only (not PIOs) who are away from their place of residence on account of employment, education or otherwise has been approved by the Government by amending the People's Representation Act. A Bill in this regard has been introduced in the Rajya Sabha on 28 Feb., 2006.

(c) and (d) No. Do not arise.